

# Farmhouse may join Belleville museum

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By EMILY CHURCH

*you* Press Staff Writer

VAN BUREN TWP. — The long-vacant Robbe family farm house on South Haggerty Road may soon find a home at Quirk School as a part of the Belleville Area Museum's outdoor expansion.

The historical house was donated to the Huron-Clinton Metropark Authority in 1967 by the Robbe family, and has been boarded up since 1976.

Belleville museum workers have already taken wood from the Robbe barn to adorn the recently-built farm equipment pavilion and a planned replica of a turn-of-the-century blacksmith's barn.

Only the 19th century house remains on the original 25-acre site.

"The inside of the house is probably one of the oldest buildings in Van Buren," said township historian Cathy Horste. Part of the interior was built in 1840. In the past, various groups have tried to renovate the two-story farm house; most notably the Van Buren Historical Society in 1985, but the project was never finished.

"I'll be cheered to see it renovated," said Horste.

The HCMA has told the museum it will move the entire house to Quirk School, said museum Curator Fonie Butler, and the board decided to give HCMA's plans a try in March.

But the farmhouse will need work before it can be used by the museum, Butler said.

"You name it; it needs it," he said.

Renovation costs could top \$100,000, said museum board Chairwoman Marilyn Montgomery.

"We told them we would accept it if we have assurances of future grant money, and we're close to being done with that now, but you need patience," Montgomery said. "We've been fortunate to receive grants before, but it gets competitive."

The museum plans to apply for a \$50,000 historical preservation grant from the state's Department of Commerce to pay for the renovation process in November, said Butler.

"It was a lovely home, and we hope to see it that way again," Montgomery said. "We've been told we could duplicate it for about a third of the cost, but then it would not be the home it was intended to be."

The Van Buren School Dis-  
(See MUSEUM, Page 4A)



## Rolle gets NAACP leadership award

Actress **Esther Rolle** became the first woman to receive the NAACP Chairman's Civil Rights Leadership Award in Los Angeles. She was honored for her work in helping raise the image of blacks through her stage, television and movie work.

NAACP chairman **William F. Gibson** presented the award during the annual convention of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

Best known for her role as matriarch Florida Evans on the situation comedy "Good Times" from 1974-79, Rolle most recently played the housekeeper Idella in the Academy Award-winning "Driving Miss Daisy."

"It's the most exciting, the most penetrating, the most valuable recognition I have received in (my) life," Rolle said of the NAACP award.

She urged blacks to take pride in their heritage.

"Remember that slavery is no shame of yours," she said. "The shame is to the enslaver. Teach your children this. Let them know. Let them hold their heads high and know the rich background from which they come."

Rolle's latest project is a one-woman stage show about the life of black educator **Mary McLeod Bethune**, who founded the forerunner of Bethune-Cookman College in Daytona Beach, Fla.



**ROLLE**

# FOR THE RECORD

## DEATHS

ROCK HILL, S.C. (AP) — **Vernon Grant**, creator of the Kellogg's cereal characters Snap, Crackle and Pop and a longtime magazine and book illustrator, died Monday at age 88. The nursing home would not release a cause of death.

MONTCHANIN, Del. (AP) — **Robert Rulph Morgan Carpenter Jr.**, former owner of the Philadelphia Phillies,

## FIRE ALARMS

Ann Arbor: 3:41 p.m.; 1500 block of Pauline; apartment fire.

9:16 p.m.; North Main Street; trash fire.

## Correction

A story Monday about Nico



# Museum

(Continued from Page 1A)

trict Board of Education, which still manages Quirk School — although the building is no longer used as an elementary school — discussed the Robbe farmhouse move Monday night, but the board took no action on the move.

"It's like an open issue revisited," said board President Robert Fowler.

The board offered to sell the strip of land where the pavilion now sits, and the proposed site of the blacksmith's barn and Robbe house to the museum for \$1 last year, Montgomery said, but the museum did not take the offer.

"I don't think the property should change hands," she said. "It belongs to the community. We don't want to purchase it; we would like to restore it on school property ... It's good for the students."

Belleville High School students seeking extra graduation credits would be eligible to work on the renovation in an after-school construction class, Butler said. Belleville students built a majority of the museum's Main Street room, now housed in the Quirk School gym.

At the heart of the issue is the liability insurance the dis-



PRESS PHOTO/JEFF LAWRENCE

**The Robbe family farm house on 12955 S. Haggerty Road may soon move to the Belleville Area Museum at Quirk School. The museum plans to apply for a \$50,000 grant to pay for the historical home's elaborate renovation.**

trict would have to buy if the property stayed in the district's hands.

"It's fair to say that (liability insurance) is a big part of it," Fowler said. It was not known how much the insurance would cost.

Montgomery said the museum is planning to take part in insurance costs.

"It think it's prudent," she said. "We don't want to be a liability to the school."

Bulter said he plans to ap-

proach the three neighboring communities, Sumpter Township, Belleville, Van Buren Township — which have helped fund the museum in the past — for financial support this fall before they reach an agreement with the school district.

If the museum receives grant money next year, the house could be moved by next summer, Montgomery said.

"But I can't see us completing everything for five more years," she said.





PRESS PHOTO/ JEFF LAWRENCE

Horizon School is the cre-  
al poster. The poster project  
e, headed by Kitty Coryell,  
Graphic artist Mike Ellinger,  
n by VanBemmelen to create  
ne next week in the windows

## and-breaking

n- year, will cost about \$6 million,  
t- including site acquisition, de-  
molition of some existing struc-  
er tures, the construction of a  
a, building of 42,397 square feet  
of and the improvement of the  
parking lot to include about 400  
or spaces.

rt- The County Building Author-  
ity awarded the general con-  
rd tract for the construction to El-  
of gin Builders, Southfield, for  
\$2,484,000, said Finkel.

for About 150 employees will  
ext work in the new building,

school.

He earned his degree in engineering and applied science.

Five Ypsilanti men were selected for the 1990 edition of Out-  
standing Young Men of America, an annual publication listing  
men aged 21 to 40, whose achievements are considered notewor-  
thy.

Michael L. Swanigan, Darryl Cedric Eddings, Cordell  
Jefferson, Thomas Tony and Allen Martin are on this year's  
list.

Rita Ann Sheffer of Belleville received an associate of general  
studies degree from Wayne County Community College during the  
college's 21st Annual Commencement exercises.

Sheffer graduated Summa Cum Laude at Cobo Hall Arena in  
Detroit.

Tamara Word of Appleridge in Ypsilanti recently received a  
Delta Sigma Theta scholarship.

Word, a graduate of Willow Run High School, will study chemi-  
cal engineering at Michigan State University, beginning in Sep-  
tember.

Alison Chapekis of Ypsilanti was named to the Dean's Honor  
Roll for the spring term at Lawrence Technological University.

Students must maintain a grade-point average of 3.5 to be  
named to the honor roll. They must also be full-time students.

*So what about you?*

*Or someone in your family, in your neighborhood, at work,  
school or church who has achieved some notable accomplishment.  
If it's good news about you, or them, we'd like to share it with our  
readers in our About You column on this page. Submit the informa-  
tion and picture (not necessary) along with phone number for verifi-  
cation to: About You, Ypsilanti Press, 20 E. Michigan, Ypsilanti,  
Mich. 48198, or drop it off at the newsroom window.*